

Robert Betz Testimony in Favor of HJ0002

Good Afternoon,

My name is Bob Betz. I live in District 9A along with 800 other Maryland voters who want you to call for an Article V Amendments Convention. Those 800 voters and I have one message for you today: Please send HJ2 to the full House of Delegates, for a fair discussion, debate and vote.

In my testimony today, I want to expose the fantasy behind the most common objections to this resolution. I have seen them presented before this committee in the past and you are likely to hear them again, so I want you prepared to understand them when you see and hear them.

First, is the claim that a Constitutional Convention could destroy the entire U.S. government and should be avoided at all costs. That's true and all of us supporting HJ2 today oppose a Constitutional Convention. However, HJ2 seeks an Amendments Convention, NOT a Constitutional Convention. The two are as different as Joe Biden and Donald Trump. A simple reading of Article V makes that clear.

Second, is the claim that there is no precedent for a Convention of States. In fact, Conventions of States were common when our country was founded. They are simply any meeting between any number of states to talk about something and maybe make a decision or two. The most recent one was held in the 1990s to discuss water rights among several southwestern states. They didn't call it a "Convention of States", but that's what it was and the Amendments Convention will just be the next one.

Third, is the claim that a Convention of States would operate without rules, could not be controlled, and would allow corporate donors, lobbyists and other undesirables to rewrite the constitution and destroy our civil liberties. Again, a simple reading of Article V makes it clear that the ONLY power this Convention of States will have is to PROPOSE, not even adopt, amendments to the constitution.

I'll say just one more thing in closing. The objections I've heard, and that will likely be submitted to this committee, are the product of people who either haven't read Article V, read it but can't understand simple English, or who understand what an Article V Convention means and will say anything to retain the power they hold over us by changing nothing, and prevent Marylanders from regaining any power of self-governance.

Thank you, Bob Betz, State Information Analyst